ACTING WITH CONFIDENCE

Scotland's Theatre Architecture

HISTORIC SCOTLAND ALBA AOSMHOR

Theatres are an important part of Scotland's cultural, social and architectural history. Each has its own story to tell. In 2008-9 Historic Scotland undertook a thematic study of Scotland's historic theatre buildings, working closely with The Theatres Trust. This booklet celebrates the architects and styles of our theatres.

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The Theatres Trust

H1.611 The House Produced from sustainable material

A stonework detail from The King's Theatre, Edinburgh

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Stained glass in the entrance doors of the Universal Hall, Findhorn

Foreword

Theatres are an important part of Scotland's cultural, social and architectural history and as venues they have played a key role in the development of our performing arts. They range from prominent and highly distinctive buildings which give character and expression to our streetscapes, through to near-hidden structures which nonetheless frequently conceal wonderfully decorative interiors. Each has its own history, its own personality, its own triumphs and tragedies. Each has its own story to tell.

In 2008–9 Historic Scotland undertook a thematic study of Scotland's historic theatre buildings, working closely with The Theatres Trust. We looked at a great variety of theatres across the country so that we could decide which were deserving of protection by listing. We also reviewed the information we held about theatres which already had protection, to ensure that this information was accurate and informative. Listing does not, of course, fossilise buildings. Its purpose is to ensure that the importance of such buildings is not inadvertently lost by unthinking changes.

Our theatres are an exceptional inheritance and they contribute widely to our sense of place. I would like to share with you the variety and richness of Scotland's theatres. This booklet looks at the architects and styles of these high-quality buildings. We hope that this work will help ensure that these marvellous buildings will remain a part of our lives for generations to come.

Malcolm Cooper
Chief Inspector
Historic Scotland Inspectorate

The origins of theatre

Modern theatre in Europe has its origins in the medieval period when it was part of folk, religious and courtly activities. Festivals such as May Day would be accompanied by shows. Religious performances had a moral purpose to educate a largely illiterate audience. Music, song, poetry and dance were also a part of royal pageants and tournaments. These probably mostly took place outdoors in summer on 'playfields' or in temporary timber booth theatres specially constructed for the purpose, often adjacent to churches, or in suitable buildings converted for the occasion such as halls or barns.

Dating from around 1538, this carved oak roundel from Stirling Castle probably decorated the ceiling of the King's Inner Hall and depicts a jester.

A player or minstrel from a 14th-century English manuscript.
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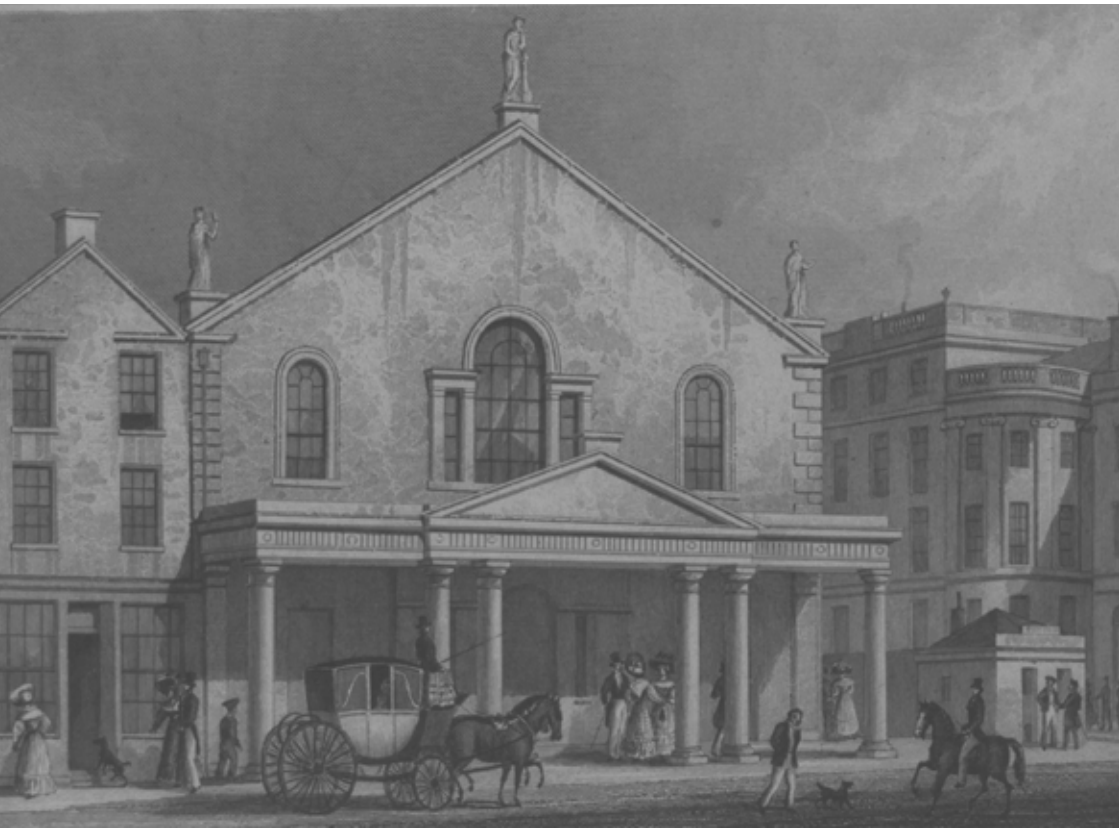
The Reformation in the 16th century changed these activities and the church frowned upon folk plays and even royal entertainments of this kind. Religious plays could still be performed, provided that they had a moral or sacred purpose. The civil and religious wars of the 17th century further suppressed theatre, and the absence of a monarchy resident in Scotland meant that there was no patronage for play-writing or support for play-going. While street entertainment such as acrobats or wandering minstrels could be found, it was not until the late 18th century that theatre began to be accepted once again as a legitimate form of entertainment.

The playwright and poet Allan Ramsay acquired what was possibly the first regular theatre in Scotland, in Carrubber's Close in Edinburgh in 1736. Although this had existed as a theatrical venue previously, Ramsay wished to have his own theatrical company regularly producing plays. This was closed by the 1737 Theatres Licensing Act, which required the Lord Chamberlain to vet scripts before a licence would be granted for drama, comedy or opera. The Canongate Concert Hall in Edinburgh opened in November 1747 and it is thought to have been the first building in Scotland constructed solely for theatrical purposes. However, it too closed due to the stipulation that any theatre presenting spoken drama had to be granted a Royal Patent, and this required an Act of Parliament. It was refurbished and opened legally as the Theatre Royal in 1767.

The Scottish Enlightenment, along with the beginnings of the creation of Edinburgh's New Town in the 18th century, created a more accepting attitude to theatre. The construction of a new Theatre Royal in Shakespeare Square began in 1768 and it opened in December 1769. Glasgow's Theatre Royal opened in Dunlop Street on 9th January 1782, and in 1795 there was a theatre in Aberdeen too. Although none of these early theatres survives, this was the beginning of theatre architecture in Scotland based on a Georgian theatre model. By the close of the century, smaller towns began to have purpose-built theatres or used existing buildings, such as town halls, for performances. Granting of Royal Patents was abolished in 1843 and the Victorian and Edwardian period saw a flourishing of theatre architecture.



The Theatre Royal in Shakespeare Square in Edinburgh was located opposite Register House. It was demolished to make way for the former General Post Office of 1861–5, now Waverleygate.
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Scotland's early theatre buildings

Tracing Scotland's early theatres is not an easy task. Many had begun as concert halls or circuses to avoid the legal restrictions which were placed on theatres themselves. They often passed through a bewildering succession of different owners and name changes. A great number of 19th-century theatres were destroyed by fire. A combination of extensive use of timber in the interiors as well as candlelight or gas lighting or the use of limelight meant that they were susceptible. Fumes and heat from gas lighting made the air quality very poor. Rapid building and frequent refurbishments could also result in unsafe construction.

A drawing from the publication The Glasgow Looking Glass of 1825 showing Miss Foot at the Theatre Royal.
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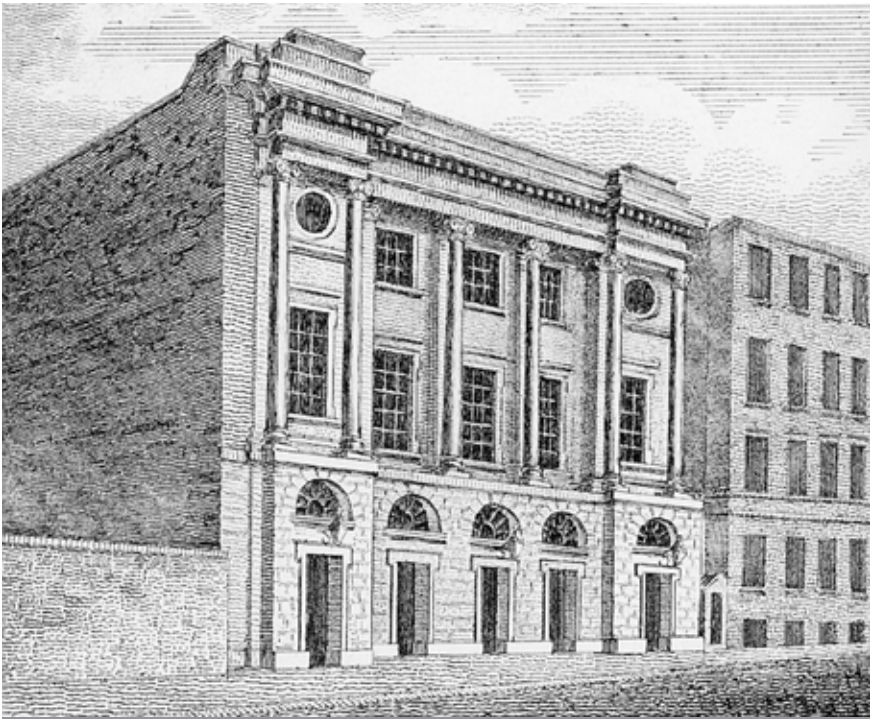

Designed by the renowned architect David Hamilton and opened in 1805, the Theatre Royal in Queen Street, Glasgow where Miss Foot performed is said to have been the first theatre in the country to have had gas lighting installed, in 1818. In 1829, like many theatres of the period, it was destroyed by fire.
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One of our earliest surviving purpose-built theatres is the Theatre Royal in Dumfries which continues in use to this day. It opened on Saturday 29th September 1792 and was designed by the local architect Thomas Boyd. It is thought that he took inspiration from the Theatre Royal in Bristol and the Shakespeare Square example in Edinburgh. The poet Robert Burns took an active role in its establishment and the building was completed at a cost of around £800. It was remodelled by C J Phipps of London in 1876, and the exterior was altered at this time from a simple classical-style pedimented entrance elevation with a projecting portico to the building which we see today. The interior has been altered and it is mostly by Colin Morton of 1959–60, although it retains a decorative iron gallery front in the auditorium by Phipps.

The Theatre Royal, Dumfries.
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The exterior style most often chosen for these early theatre buildings was classical. Internally they were often courtyard style with a stage that projected well in front of the proscenium arch. Scenery was changed by sliding flats along grooves in the stage floor. As theatre-going was at this time still seen as somewhat disreputable, the classical style of architecture helped to foster a sense of legitimacy and respectability. While 18th-century theatre survivals are rare, the late-19th-century introduction of electric lighting and the safety curtain to prevent fires on stage reaching the audience, as well as other fire safety measures, have left us with an impressive legacy of late-Victorian and Edwardian theatres.

Music hall and variety theatre

While the Theatres Royal were seeking respectability, there was a growing market for cheaper, less highbrow types of entertainment, especially in the cities. Influxes of workers often living in poor conditions would find escapism in music halls with their mixture of songs, comedy and speciality acts such as acrobats or magicians. Often music halls were attached to a public house, and smoking and drinking during the performance was accepted, in contrast with the separate bars found in established theatres.

One of the earliest and finest surviving examples of a music hall in the UK is found in Glasgow's Trongate. The Britannia Panopticon Music Hall is a rare gem which remains full of atmosphere, and the feeling of a rowdy music-hall audience is still tangible in the auditorium. Dated 1857, it was speculatively built as warehousing, but this proposed use was quickly abandoned and the architects Gildard & Macfarlane turned it into a music hall instead. Patrons would have sat on chairs at tables and on wooden benches, with up to 1,500 people watching the performance which would take place several times a day. This was entertainment before the advent of formal planning, such as ladies' toilets or fire safety measures. With an interior which is largely composed of applied and carved timber, it is remarkable that it has survived.

The newly restored façade of the Britannia Panopticon Music Hall in Glasgow's Trongate. The work was part-funded by Historic Scotland.
© Euan Adamson. www.euanadamson.com

The exceptionally rare interior of the Britannia Panopticon Music Hall.
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While the Britannia would not have been the most comfortable place to watch a performance, the music-hall tradition found a successor in variety theatre, and the Pavilion Theatre in Glasgow is a luxurious example of the type. Designed in an exuberant French Baroque style, and with a profusion of detail on its buff terracotta street elevations including touches of blue and gold mosaic, it makes a striking and distinctive contribution to the architectural character of the city. It opened on 29th February 1904 and it remains renowned for its variety programme and pantomime season. It was designed by Bertie Crewe, one of the most celebrated theatre architects of the period, and it is one of the country's best surviving Edwardian theatres. By this time the stage playing area had retreated behind the proscenium, and special effects were created by means of under-stage lifts and flying-in scenery. A rare operational survivor in the interior is an electrically operated sliding roof panel which could be opened to keep the air in the auditorium fresh. An early centralised vacuuming system also remains in place.

The highly decorative Pavilion Theatre in Glasgow.

The sliding roof panel above the auditorium in the Pavilion Theatre, Glasgow.
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Another theatre which became a popular venue for variety performances was the Gaiety Theatre in Ayr. Designed by local architect J McHardy Young and built in 1902, it cost £9,500. It suffered a fire shortly after opening and the ornate rococo interior was rebuilt by Cullen, Lochhead & Brown in 1903–4. It achieved fame from the 1930s onwards when it added to Ayr's popularity as a seaside resort with its variety show which became known as the 'Gaiety Whirl'.

Bertie Crewe.
© theat*research* archive

Bertie Crewe (c.1860–1937) was one of the leading specialist theatre architects of his generation, and the Pavilion Theatre is an outstanding example of his work. Crewe trained in Paris, as well as London, which may explain his adoption of the French Baroque style. The Pavilion was constructed for the Newcastle-based Thomas Barrasford, a variety theatre entrepreneur, who often chose Crewe for his commissions. It is the best example of Crewe's work to survive in Scotland.

Victorian opulence

The Victorian period saw theatre building evolve into an architectural specialism. Legislation to improve the theatres' risk of fire by including fire exits and escape routes was introduced. New construction techniques, such as horseshoe-shaped cantilevered balconies which do not need to be supported by columns and therefore improved the view of the stage, required careful planning by an expert designer, as did all the backstage spaces. Theatre-going became more respectable, and theatres were designed in a variety of bold and exuberant styles to attract their audiences. Their interiors became increasingly opulent to give their patrons a feeling of luxury and the chance to enter another world for the duration of their visit. For the wealthier patrons, plush upholstered seats replaced wooden benches, and ornate gilded plasterwork for the auditorium and public spaces became the norm. The proscenium arch, the structure which frames the stage, became very decorative. Gas, followed by electric lighting, allowed for sparkling interiors where the bright lights reflected off the gilding, mirrors and elaborate chandeliers.

The wealthy could choose to occupy expensive boxes, which were designed to flank the stage and, while they did not offer the best view of the performance, they gave their users an opportunity to be seen by the audience. The middle classes could sit at the front of the stalls, divided from the cheaper seats in the rear stalls (also known as the pit) and in the balcony. A feature of many theatres of this period are the separate entrances for the different seating areas.

Like many theatres of the period, the category A-listed Theatre Royal in Hope Street in Glasgow has had a complex history. The first theatre on the site was built in 1867 by the architectural practice of Clarke & Bell and by 1869 it was named the Theatre Royal. A fire in 1879 destroyed the interior and the building was rebuilt in 1880 by the celebrated theatre architect C J Phipps, reusing the surviving exterior walls. This rebuilding also burnt down 15 years later but was reconstructed by Phipps largely to his previous design. It was converted to television studios in the 1950s and suffered a further

The Theatre Royal, Hope Street, Glasgow.
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fire in 1969. Derek Sugden of Arup Associates renovated the theatre as an opera house in 1974–5 and it continues today as the home of Scottish Opera, as well as hosting a variety of other types of productions. The magnificent auditorium with its delicate neoclassical plasterwork has been carefully restored.

The interior of the Theatre Royal, Hope Street with its delicate gilded plasterwork.
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The auditorium ceiling of the Theatre Royal, Hope Street.
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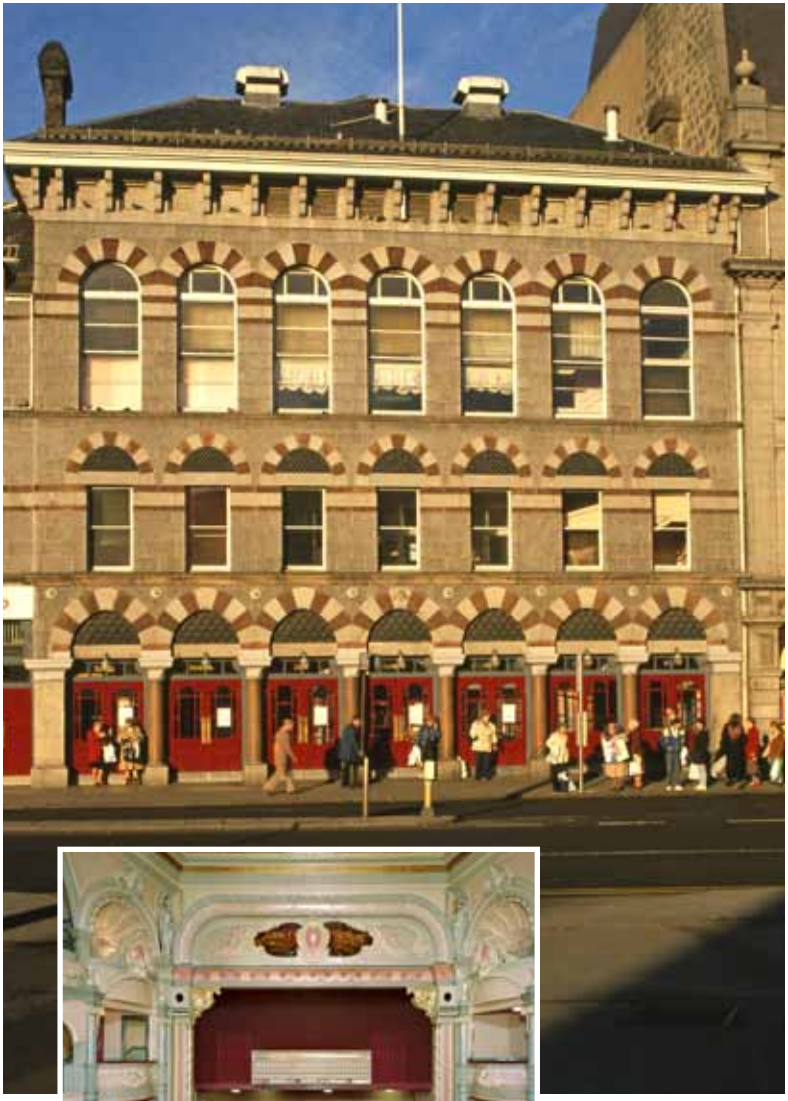
In Aberdeen, the category A-listed Tivoli Theatre has a remarkable eye-catching façade designed by C J Phipps and the distinguished local architect, James Matthews, who later became the Lord Provost of the city. Built in 1872, the striking street elevation is Venetian Gothic in style, with colourful bands of pink and grey granite, round-arched openings and deep, bracketed overhanging eaves. Theatre specialist Frank Matcham carried out some alterations to the building in 1897 and returned in 1909 to carry out more comprehensive work, which has left us with a high-quality Edwardian Baroque interior that shows his skill working within the constraints of an existing building. It ceased working as a theatre in 1966 and became a bingo hall until 1998. However, it is hoped that it will reopen as a theatre venue again.



The distinctive exterior of the Tivoli Theatre, Aberdeen.

The interior of the Tivoli Theatre in Aberdeen in 1999. Note the deep shell niches above the boxes on either side of the stage.
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Lit by electricity from its outset in 1883, the category A-listed Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh is an excellent example of C J Phipps's skill as a theatre architect. Designed in a classical style in keeping with the predominant architecture of the city, it was built at a cost of £17,000 for John B Howard and Frederick W P Wyndham, who would later form the famous theatre owning and production company, Howard & Wyndham Ltd. It has an imposing and grand street elevation of cream-painted stucco with giant Corinthian pilasters to the first and second floors. There are three tiers of horseshoe-shaped balconies in the auditorium supported by finely detailed cast-iron columns, and the decoration is classical to match the exterior. A single-story glass extension was added in 1986, by architects RHWL with collaborating architects Simpson & Brown, as part of a wider renovation project, providing foyer and box office space.

A view of the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh, taken around 1930.
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The interior of the Royal Lyceum from around 1930.
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The balconies and ceiling of the Royal Lyceum auditorium, photographed in 1990.
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Charles John Phipps
© Riba Library Photographs Collection

Charles John Phipps (1835–1897) was born in Bath and began his practice there shortly before moving to London, where he remained based for the rest of his career. He is likely to have studied theatre design on the continent as part of his training and he became best known for his theatre commissions. A catastrophic fire at his Theatre Royal in Exeter in 1887, where around 150 people lost their lives, damaged his career in later life.

Away from the major cities, venues hosting theatrical performances often had a multi-purpose function to meet the wider needs of the community. The Webster Memorial Theatre in Arbroath was listed as part of our theatres thematic study, and when it opened in 1865 it contained a museum and a hall for concerts and public meetings. It hosted touring plays and vaudeville, and it was eventually gifted to the town by the Webster family who were local flax manufacturers. It was designed by local architect James Maclaren, who was based in Dundee and had worked in the celebrated Scottish architect David Bryce's office. In common with civic-type buildings of the period, it is designed in a classical style to give the building gravitas in the streetscape.

The Webster Memorial Theatre, Arbroath.

Working in historic theatres

Chris Evans is Head of Administration and Projects for the King's Theatre and the Theatre Royal in Glasgow, both of which are managed by the Ambassador Theatre Group. He started his career at the Lyceum in Edinburgh before moving to Glasgow in 2003. On beginning to work in the nationally important King's Theatre, Chris remembers: 'I was immediately struck by how passionate people are about the King's Theatre. Customers and staff have a real affection for the building and certainly relate to the unique atmosphere created by the design and history of the building and its tradition as a theatre, making it very different to a modern theatre.'

A full programme of refurbishment and restoration is planned at the King's and Chris explains: 'One of the challenges I have is to maintain the special ambience of the theatre while ensuring that the building meets 21st-century needs. It is a big responsibility and we want to get it just right.'

The Theatre Royal and the King's are very different in design and atmosphere, but Chris notes that they both have excellent acoustics. He describes more about the different atmosphere in their auditoriums: 'I find the empty auditorium at the King's still holds the feeling of what I imagine a music hall would have felt like and the Royal more of a playhouse, however, part of the magic of live performance is that atmosphere can become whatever the combination of cast and audience create.'

Chris Evans in the King's Theatre, Glasgow.

Balcony decoration at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow.

The Edwardian years and beyond

The evolution of grand and luxurious theatre design reached its epitome in the Edwardian period, and Scotland is fortunate to have a number of key examples which are an important part of our architectural heritage.

Constructed in red sandstone and designed in an Edwardian Baroque style is the magnificent King's Theatre in Glasgow. Opened in 1904, it is a notable surviving work by the renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham. Here, all the key attributes of an Edwardian theatre can be seen. The imposing street elevation, designed to attract an audience and built in high-quality materials in a style compatible with any large civic building, demonstrated that theatre-going was now a more respectable form of entertainment. Comfort for the audience was a priority, as was maximising audience numbers. Major theatres were designed with a selection of bars and cloakrooms. At the King's in Glasgow there is a grand marble-lined entrance foyer with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, and this leads into the highly decorative auditorium. The plasterwork in the auditorium is modelled in fibrous plaster, a Matcham speciality which allowed for more sculptural three-dimensional forms to be created. The three tiers of balconies are up to date in their cantilevered construction method, as this allowed for a better view of the stage and also created more space for paying customers. When built, the King's had seating capacity for 1,841 people.

Frank Matcham's design for the King's Theatre in Glasgow.
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The impressive foyer of the King's Theatre in Glasgow, photographed around 1930.
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A view of the auditorium of the King's Theatre, Glasgow.
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Of course, just because a theatre is listed, this does not mean that it cannot evolve and adapt to meet changing requirements. His Majesty's Theatre in Aberdeen is listed at category A in view of its national importance. It is also by the architect Frank Matcham, and opened shortly after the King's in Glasgow in December 1906 at a cost of £35,000. Built in Kemnay granite and with a copper-capped dome, it forms a distinguished feature in the streetscape. The auditorium has three galleries and it is somewhat restrained in its decor.

The classical frieze over the proscenium arch in His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen.
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The theatre closed in March 2004 in order for an extension and renovation project to be carried out by Aberdeen City Council Architects. Amongst the new facilities required to keep the building functioning were modern dressing rooms, a rehearsal area and a green room. A new glass and granite extension was built which includes a new foyer and box office, as well as a coffee shop and restaurant. It reopened in September 2005.

The exterior of His Majesty's Theatre in Aberdeen, with its 2004–5 glass and granite addition.

Frank Matcham.
© Getty Images

Frank Matcham (1854–1920) was born in Devon and began his architectural career in Torquay. In the mid-1870s he moved to London and worked for the theatre architect Jethro Thomas Robinson. In 1877 he married Robinson's younger daughter, and on the death of Robinson in 1878 he inherited his practice when still in his mid-20s. He built up the largest theatre practice in Britain and he was an instrumental figure in the surge of theatre building at the turn of the 20th century. Arguably one of the greatest and most influential theatre designers of his age, he was able to work in a variety of styles and, with a particular interest in highly decorative interiors, he made an enormous contribution to our architectural heritage. He is said to have worked on over 120 theatres in the UK, either from scratch or as reworkings of existing buildings.

A contemporary drawing of the front elevation of the King's Theatre in Edinburgh.
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The King's Theatre in Edinburgh was designed by J D Swanston of Kirkcaldy and James Davidson of Coatbridge, who separately developed theatre-building skills and collaborated on this project. The memorial stone was laid on 18th August 1906 by Andrew Carnegie and it opened on 8th December 1906 with a performance of Cinderella. It came under the management of Howard & Wyndham in 1928, and in 1930 Noël Coward's Private Lives was premiered here. It starred Coward himself as well as Laurence Olivier, amongst others. The theatre has an important high-quality interior with a marble staircase, and the then highly fashionable Art Nouveau style is used in the stained glass in the building. A particular feature of the auditorium is the stacking on either side of the stage of three tiers of boxes, in the manner of a Viennese opera house. The photograph of the ladies' cloakroom shows how lavish the facilities for the public could be.

Taken around 1930, this interior shot shows the ladies' cloakroom in the King's Theatre, Edinburgh.
© RCAHMS (Scottish Colorfoto Collection). Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk

The Alhambra Theatre in Dunfermline opened in August 1922 as a cinema and theatre. It was designed by local architect John Fraser, and its interior is typical of the period in that it mixes a variety of different styles including classical, Egyptian and Art Deco to create an exuberant blend. It operated principally as a cinema from 1924 until 1965 and then became a bingo hall. It was, however, relaunched as a theatre and live music venue in 2008.

A visitor to Edinburgh could be forgiven for thinking that the Festival Theatre in Nicolson Street is an entirely modern building. Law & Dunbar-Nasmith (latterly LDN Architects) added the sweeping concave glass and steel street extension as part of a renovation project which was completed in 1994. However, the interior contains the 1927–9 auditorium by W & T R Milburn. The Milburn brothers were based in Sunderland and practised mainly in the North of England. They are associated especially with the Moss Empire chain of theatres and were noted for their ability to achieve excellent sight lines in their theatres. While impressive, the classical-style detailing of the auditorium is much more restrained than in the work of earlier exponents such as Matcham, and it heralds a simplifying of interior design which would become much more apparent in the post-war period.

The interior of the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh.
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The exterior of the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh.
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A new type of entertainment venue emerged in the interwar years when leisure time increased and railways and car travel allowed the urban population to visit seaside resorts with ease. The leisure pavilion was created as a multifunctional venue, and one of the most outstanding examples of the type is found at Rothesay on the Isle of Bute. Designed by the Ayr-based architect James Carrick and dated 1938, it is the very essence of 1930s modernist design with its emphasis on the horizontal and its smooth clean streamlined lines and distinctive glazing pattern. It had a flexible interior space which could accommodate variety shows, dances, exhibitions and indoor sports.

The quintessentially 1930s Rothesay Pavilion.

A view backstage at the Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh, showing the fly floor above.
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Behind the scenes

The action in a theatre is not confined to the stage. The design and planning of a theatre has to take account of all the backstage functions. Depending on the type of theatre, a number of other spaces are required to assist in the running of the venue such as offices, dressing rooms, wardrobe, rehearsal spaces and workshops. Critical to any performance are the backstage, under-stage and fly tower areas. These are functional areas where practicality is key and the luxury of the front-of-house areas is left behind.

Scenery is operated from fly floors and towers located above the stage. Large pieces of scenery can be very heavy and are moved using pulleys, winches and counterweights. Modern stage machinery, including power-assisted flying, requires less crew to operate, but in historic theatres a great number of hands were needed to change scenery. The stage floor itself could have a number of innovations to allow for spectacular effects to be created, such as trap doors or elevators to bring performers onto or off the stage in seconds. Under-stage areas would have had many backstage staff making sure that the performance operated smoothly.

The basement of the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow in 1977, showing machinery for raising the scenery.
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A shared dressing room at the Theatre Royal in Glasgow.

While leading actors might have their own dressing room, other performers would usually share a dressing room.

The Citizens Theatre in Glasgow is fortunate to have surviving Victorian theatre machinery including a rare paint frame. The paint frame allows scene painters to move huge canvases up and down with ease to paint backcloths for sets, and it would once have been a common feature in producing theatres. At the Citizens it remains in use to this day. The façade of the Citizens Theatre was destroyed in 1977 and the current yellow-brick street elevation was added in 1989. Behind the 1989 extension you can clearly see the gabled elevation of the earlier theatre, which was originally Her Majesty's Theatre and was rebuilt in 1878 and reopened as the Royal Princess's Theatre. It was leased in 1945 to the Citizens Theatre who have since remained there. The auditorium contains two horseshoe-shaped balconies supported by cast-iron columns. It also retains a raked stage, one which slopes downwards towards the auditorium. This was a common feature in early theatres, and it was designed to improve the view for the audience of the action on the stage and to aid the projection of sound from it.

The Citizens Theatre, Glasgow.

The paint frame at the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow.

The Cottier Theatre, Glasgow.
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20th-century conversions

A theatre does not have to be purpose-built. In the 20th century a number of theatres have been created from the successful conversions of other building types.

Former places of worship can be suitable candidates for conversion to theatre spaces. Designed with acoustics in mind and to hold a large audience, they can find a new use as performance venues. The Cottier Theatre in Glasgow was built in 1865–6 as a United Presbyterian church and it was the first major commission

for the important architect William Leiper. Designed in a Normandy Gothic style, it has a remarkably striking steeple and it is also renowned for the quality of its interior painted decoration and stained glass by the artist Daniel Cottier. It was converted by the Four Acres Charitable Trust into the Cottier Theatre and operated from 1994 to 2004 when a restoration programme was begun, supported by grant aid from Historic Scotland.

The Church Hill Theatre in Edinburgh is likewise a converted church building, altered for theatre use in 1962–5. Originally Morningside Free Church, it was designed by the architect Hippolyte J Blanc, who had been born in Edinburgh to French parents who owned a shop selling French boots and shoes for ladies.

Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh.
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The former Episcopal church in Market Square, Dumfries was converted to a small theatre in the 1970s and is known as the Brigend Theatre. Dating from 1891, it makes a distinctive addition to the streetscape with its rounded apse and steeply pitched roof carefully designed to make the most of the gushet site.

Brigend Theatre, Dumfries.

Haddo House Hall was listed as part of our theatres thematic study. It is an unusually fine example of a timber building constructed as a community hall in 1891. Situated close to the A-listed Haddo House, it forms an important part of the group of estate buildings. The hall was built after Lord and Lady Aberdeen's first tour of Canada in 1890 when they saw similar community buildings. It originally had tennis and badminton courts with a reading room and library as well as space for meetings and concerts. After the Second World War the Haddo House Choral and Operatic Society was formed and the Hall had an increasing role as a performance venue which continues today.

Haddo House Hall, Aberdeenshire.
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The interior of Haddo House Hall, Aberdeenshire.
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Garrison Theatre, Shetland.

One of the country's northernmost theatres is the Garrison Theatre in Lerwick, Shetland. Dated 1903, it was built as a drill hall and gymnasium for soldiers to perform military drill. In 1942 it was converted by the Entertainments National Service Association to a theatre to entertain troops stationed in Shetland. Shetland Arts took over the theatre in 2006 and it provides a venue for theatre, concerts and film shows, amongst other community uses.

In Glasgow is perhaps one of the most unusual reuses of a building to create a theatre space. The Tramway Theatre was built in stages from 1894 to around 1912 as a Tramway Works and Depot. It originally had stables on the first floor. It was converted to the Museum of Transport in 1964, but this was relocated in the 1980s, and plans to create a performing and visual arts space were put forward in 1989 to celebrate Glasgow's City of Culture status in 1990.

The former Tramway Works and Depot in Albert Drive, Glasgow in 1987 before its conversion to the Tramway Theatre.
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Post-war theatres

In the second half of the 20th century, entertainment venues faced competition in their struggle to retain an audience, not least from the advance of television which became widespread in people's homes. Many theatres were demolished at this time or converted to other uses.

In the 1960s local authorities took on the role of building new theatres, often as part of wider civic complexes and with a multi-purpose use envisioned from their inception.

A good example of this type of civic building is the Brunton Theatre in Musselburgh, which opened in 1971. It was designed by the respected practice of Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth & Paul and it is incorporated into wider council facilities.

The Brunton Theatre in Musselburgh.

A number of these civic centres were considered as part of the theatres thematic study, but it became apparent that this was a distinctive building type in its own right which would benefit from a separate review to appreciate their architectural contribution in context. We intend to undertake such a review in the future.

Pitlochry Festival Theatre was founded by John Stewart in 1951 and began life giving performances in a tent. A permanent venue was designed by Law & Dunbar-Nasmith (LDN) and it was completed in 1981. Dark brown brick supports a cantilevered glazed foyer which overlooks the banks of the River Tummel. It is estimated that Pitlochry Festival Theatre contributes £13million to the area's economy each year.

A view of Pitlochry Festival Theatre taken in 1999.
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Listing of post-war buildings is carried out to the same criteria as buildings from earlier periods but with a greater emphasis on rigour to ensure that their contextual contribution to their time is fully understood. We do not normally list buildings less than 30 years old unless under exceptional circumstances. One of the most important examples of our post-war theatre heritage is Eden Court Theatre in Inverness, which was listed at category A in 2004.

Eden Court Theatre, Inverness by LDN architects with the new extension by Page\Park architects to the left.
© Keith Hunter/ Page\Park Architects

Constructed between 1973 and 1976 and designed by Graham Law of Law & Dunbar-Nasmith architects (LDN) in collaboration with theatre consultant John Wyckham, this visually stunning theatre complex is linked to the 19th-century Bishop's Palace which LDN utilised as a green room and office space. Composed of hexagonal glass walls with slated pitched roofs, the internal spaces make use of the dramatic views of the River Ness. When built it was one of the first high-status, large, modernist buildings in the Highlands and it was also the first completely new full-scale theatre to be built in Scotland within approximately fifty years. In 1977 it won the Royal Institute of British Architects Award.

It was tailored to be multifunctional and accommodate orchestral and chamber concerts, opera, ballet, drama, conferences, dances and films. In contrast to other types of modern theatres, it was designed with a traditional three-tiered auditorium. This was a significant factor in the venue's flexibility.

In 2004–7 Page\Park architects completed a refurbishment and extension to the theatre to provide an additional theatre space, two cinemas, two studios, and changing and office accommodation. It is now the largest multi-use arts centre north of the border.

Scotland continues to benefit from exciting new theatre design, from Nicoll Russell Studios' award-winning Dundee Rep Theatre of 1982 to the same firm's rebuilding of the Byre Theatre in St Andrews in 2002. The new Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, designed by Groves-Raines Architects, opened in 1992 and has two theatres with flexible seating to accommodate varied types of performance. More recently, The Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh's High Street opened in 2006 and has a storytelling theatre and ceilidh room. Designed by Malcolm Fraser Architects, it won a Royal Institute of British Architects Award in 2007, amongst other accolades.

Listing acts as an important check in the planning process so that the value of a building of special architectural or historic interest can be taken into account when changes are proposed. As a result of the thematic study we have a renewed understanding of these unique structures and their place in our architectural heritage. The revised listings will aid local authorities in their planning decisions. With careful management we hope that these buildings will continue to have a sustainable future and carry on delighting audiences for years to come.

Building a modern theatre

Spectacularly set on the edge of sand dunes near Forres in Moray, the Universal Hall at the Findhorn Foundation Community was visited as part of the thematic study. Although it is still technically too young to be considered for listing, having been completed around 1983, it is an interesting example of late-20th-century theatre building in Scotland and it will likely be assessed for listing in the future.

Dave Till.

The design concept was drawn up by architect George Ripley in the early 1970s. Taking almost a decade to build, input from other architects, artists and visitors to the Foundation moulded the design to what we have today. A part of what makes this building special is the dedication of the volunteer workforce which built it.

For Dave Till, Publicity Manager of the Universal Hall, the extraordinary community effort which resulted in this fascinating building is part of what makes the building such a special place: 'It was a labour of love for the people engaged with the construction and it is a lasting expression of those who were involved. Using largely natural materials, sourced locally where possible, the lengthy construction period was partly due to the changing availability of skills and materials.'

Comprising a café and theatre space, Dave explained that it is 'not just a theatre, it is a community hub'. The decision to design the auditorium as a thrust stage theatre (one where the stage is surrounded by the audience on three sides) was a conscious one: 'we wanted a welcoming space which could be used for meetings and wider community events as well as a theatre.'

The high quality of craftsmanship is a defining feature of the distinctive character of the Universal Hall, from the stained glass in the entrance doors to the spectacular use of timber in the geodesic roof of the auditorium.

The spectacular entrance elevation of the Universal Hall.

The auditorium of the Universal Hall.

How to find out more about listed buildings and theatres

You can search to find out whether a building is listed from our website at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk. There is also a wealth of useful information about listing including booklets which are free to download.

We have also launched a new website to promote Scotland's architecture and it can be found at www.celebratingscotlandsarchitecture.org.

Pastmap allows you to search for all of Scotland's listed buildings, scheduled monuments and gardens and designed landscapes by map. See www.pastmap.org.uk

Find out more about The Theatres Trust from their website at www.theatrestrust.org.uk.

The Dictionary of Scottish Architects at www.scottisharchitects.org.uk covers the years between 1840 and 1940 and it is currently being expanded to cover the period up to 1980. You can search by architect or building and get to know the people behind the designs through the many architect biographies.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) collects, records and interprets information on the architectural, industrial, archaeological and maritime heritage of Scotland. Find out more about their resources from their website at www.rcahms.gov.uk.

The auditorium of Perth Theatre which opened in 1900.
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Glossary

A glossary of building and architectural terms is included in *Scotland's Listed Buildings: What Listing Means to Owners and Occupiers* (2009), available free from our website.

Acknowledgements

Historic Scotland would like to thank the owners and occupiers of the theatres assessed during the thematic study. Their contribution to our knowledge of this captivating building type has been immeasurable. We also extend our thanks to The Theatres Trust for their assistance with the project, and in particular to their Planning and Heritage Adviser, Mark Price. Further thanks are also due to our peer reviewers for their valuable input to this booklet.

Access

The majority of buildings featured in this booklet are listed buildings. Although many can be seen from the street, inclusion in this booklet does not imply that such properties have public access. Please respect an owner's privacy when examining theatrical and other built heritage.

A packed audience at the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow in 1955.
© Getty Images

Text and images

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Who are we?

Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government. We are charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment. Amongst the duties of Historic Scotland's Inspectorate is to compile and maintain statutory lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. We have a dedicated listing team which researches and assesses listing proposals.

You can contact the listing team at:
hs.inspectorate@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Historic Scotland Inspectorate
Listing Team
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh EH9 1SH

Tel: 0131 668 8600

What is listing?

Listing recognises a structure's special architectural or historic interest and secures its protection under law through the planning system. It aims to protect a building's special character and interest. This is important not only to safeguard the building itself, but also to ensure that its special character is taken into account when changes are made through the planning system. Listing is intended to inform development and to support the change process as well as to reinforce sustainable development and, where possible, enhancement and regeneration. The system operates under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

The lists are primarily used by planning authorities and heritage professionals, but they also have value as a bank of information which is of benefit to a broad audience ranging from local historians and genealogists to community groups and schools.

A view of the King's Theatre, Edinburgh taken in 1993.
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Why are historic buildings special?

Our historic environment is an irreplaceable resource. Historic structures are a highly visible and accessible element of Scotland's rich heritage. Covering a wide range of functions and periods, together they chart the history of the nation. They cross all boundaries of life, from education to recreation, defence, industry, homes and worship. Much of Scotland's social and economic past and its present is expressed in these exceptional buildings. Listed buildings can include structures from great country houses to modest croft houses, tenements to toll houses, and police boxes to primary schools. They can date from the early medieval period up until around 1980. They need not necessarily be 'buildings' but could be bridges,

dovecots or statues. Whether urban, rural, industrial, public or residential, they all contribute to their particular area and to Scotland as a whole. They are integral to Scottish culture and provide a unique record of our history. We aim to help to protect and manage this national asset in a sustainable way through listing to meet our needs today and in the future.

What are the listing categories?

There are around 47,500 listed buildings in Scotland, comprising around 1% of the country's building stock. Both the interior and exterior of a building is listed regardless of the listing category. Listed buildings are assigned one of three categories to identify their particular level of interest:

Category A – buildings of national or international importance, either architectural or historic, or fine little-altered examples of some particular period, style or building type. These make up about 8% of the total.

Category B – buildings of regional or more than local importance, or major examples of some particular period, style or building type which may have been altered. Category B is currently the largest group with about 50% of the total.

Category C(S) – buildings of local importance; lesser examples of any period, style or building type, as originally constructed or moderately altered; and simple, traditional buildings which group well with others in categories A and B. This group numbers about 42%.

W. H. S. **THEATRE-ROYAL, EDINBURGH.** N. 71.

43.

LAST NIGHT OF THE COMPANY'S PERFORMING UNTIL MONDAY, SEPTEMBER THE 27TH.

For the Benefit of Mr

HENRY ERSKINE JOHNSTON,

And Last Appearance this Season.

This present Evening, Saturday, Sept. 11. 1819,

Will be performed the Tragedy of

MACBETH.

Duncan, King of Scotland, by Mr DOBBS,
Malcolm by Mr J. FARREN——Donaldbain by Miss NICOL,
Macbeth by Mr H. E. JOHNSTON,
Being his Last Appearance here this Season,
Banquo by Mr ALEXANDER—Fleance by Miss J. NICOL—Rosse by Mr W. MURRAY,
Macduff by Mr CALCRAFT,
Seyton by Mr DUFF—Captain by Mr ANDERSON—Steward by Mr AIKIN,
Officers, Messrs M'Grigor and Collins—Guards, Messrs James, Ross, Sandys, Morrison, &c.
Apparitions, Messrs Grant, Heath, Thomson, Donald, Meldrum, Marshall, Reid, Sandilands, and Robb,
English Soldiers, Messrs Grange, Cameron, Simpson, Johnston, Waterston, Hastie, Laing, Williamson, Rogers, Barclay, Bremner, &c.
Scotch Soldiers, Messrs King, Lee, Martin, Smith, Holland, Angus, Dornoch, Elwand, Fraser, Gossling, Hunt, Komrie, Rae, &c.
Hecate by Mr BENSON—First Singing Witch by Mr SHAW,
First Witch by Mr MACKAY—Second Witch by Mr CHIPPENDALE—Third Witch by Mrs NICOL,
Lady Macbeth by Mrs RENAUD,
Gentlewoman by Miss STANFIELD.

At the End of the Tragedy Mr MACKAY will, by Desire, sing the Comic Song, entitled,

Bailie Nicol Jarvie's Journey to Aberfoil.

The whole to conclude with the celebrated Melo-Drama called The

FALLS of CLYDE,

Or the Gipsies of the Glen.

With New and appropriate Music, Scenery, Machinery, Dresses, and Decorations.

General Wilford by Mr CHIPPENDALE—Kenmure, a Young Laird secretly married to Ellen Enfield, by Mr J. FARREN,
Farmer Enfield, an English Farmer, Mr MACKAY—Edward Enfield, his Son, Mr CALCRAFT,
Donald, the Highland Piper, by Mr H. E. JOHNSTON,
As originally performed by him with the greatest Success at the Theatre-Royal, Drury Lane,
Serjeant by Mr G. MARTIN—English Soldiers, Messrs Amos, Kay, Sommervell, Jackson, Rochefort, Stratton, Threipland, &c.
Malcolm, Chief of a Gang of Gipsies, by Mr ALEXANDER,
Lindley by Mr ANDERSON—Evan by Mr DOBBS—Dencleugh by Mr BENSON—Gabriel, Mr MARTIN—Allan, Mr M'GRIGOR,
Gipsies, Messrs Arnot, Chisholm, Dallas, Edgeworth, Frome, Grant, Innes, Macintosh, Claverhouse, Ferrier, Donaldson, &c.
Mrs Enfield, Mrs SHAW—Janet, Mrs NICOL—Jessy, Miss STANFIELD—Maise, Miss NICOL,
Ellen Enfield by Mrs DOBBS.

Tickets and Places for the Boxes to be had of Mr GARBUTT at the Box-Office, from Eleven to Three o'Clock, and of Mr JOHNSTON at the Theatre, and at No. 10, Shakespeare Square.

On Monday, September the 27th, the Theatre will Re Open with the Tragedy of OTHELLO,

***Othello* by Mr KEAN,**

Who is Engaged to Perform here TWELVE NIGHTS, being his Last Appearance in Edinburgh for some Time.

A playbill from 1819 advertising a performance of Macbeth at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh.
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Front cover: The King's Theatre, Glasgow

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